



# **ELSAH HISTORY**

**No. 111**

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## **Gifts for Elsah's Legacy**

By Jane Pfeifer, Guest Editor

Elsah has many friends. Some of the people who love Elsah have lived here and some have not. Elsah has been blessed by those who care about this little community and share their talents, expertise and family treasures with us. This issue is about some of these friends, their donations and legacy.

We have a legacy from the past in Elsah's many historic buildings. Our responsibility as custodians of the built environment is to maintain these buildings both for the education of the next generations and as a "green" practice that contributes to saving our environment for those who follow us.



"Elsah Gateway ca. 1950" by Errol Campbell

### **Mike Jackson, Preservationist Friend**

Mike Jackson was Chief Architect, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Springfield, Illinois. He received great praise for his work. He recently retired and will be greatly missed at IHPA, but is still active in preservation. Jackson helped Elsah with an early lecture on preservation and directed us to building experts for the Village of Elsah Historic District and the Principia College Historic District buildings. He was very helpful after the 1993 Flood. In recent years, his talks emphasized that historic preservation of buildings saves energy and resources. It is a "green" movement. With permission, we have published his summary paragraph from an article on the connection between historic preservation and sustainability with a link to the entire article.

***“When we build of stone, let us think we build forever.” John Ruskin***



“Remnant View” by Christine Samoore, 2016 Village of Elsah purchase prize winner. The theme was “Right-Sized Elsah.” The judge said, the “... 1894 Gate Lodge and entrance to the Notch Cliff estate, expressed the theme and purpose of the exhibit through the compositional quality of the image. The composition shows the building and the Mississippi River visually framed from the Ice House Ruins, creating this image within an image view.”

“Art and Science of Sustainability”

By [Mike Jackson](#), FAIA

[Illinois Historic Preservation Agency](#)

“The art and science of sustainability is based upon the three E’s - environment, economy, and equity. Advocates of sustainable design are using these principles to quantify ecologically beneficial building and development practices. The historic preservation movement is well positioned to do the same. Reduce, reuse, recycle has become a mantra of the environmental movement. The preservation movement is a true champion of building reuse. This experience has taught us many lessons about the economic, cultural and ecological values of buildings and communities. The historic preservation movement, as a profession and an approach to the treatment of the built environment, is doing something much more important than defining how to save buildings. We are advocates for historic buildings, but we are also building a culture of urban revitalization and building conservation. This may be our most important contribution to the art and science of sustainability.”

The entire article is located at this url:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/ihpa/Preserve/Pages/Green.aspx>

## Tribute -- Jack Luer, Architect and Friend



Jack Luer (1936-2016) was an architect, a friend of Elsay and an advocate for historic preservation through his works and deeds in many communities both in Illinois and Missouri. One of the preservation challenges for small communities is a lack of construction knowledge. Our own Elsay Zoning Board is and has been composed of dedicated volunteers. Even with regular training by the Village's attorney regarding the ordinances, it is difficult to evaluate and imagine a proposed building or structure. This is where Jack Luer greatly helped Elsay in the 1990s. He was given copies of the applications prior to the meetings and came prepared to discuss and help the board evaluate in detail what was requested.

He charged very little relative to the time spent and expertise provided. An added advantage was that we had an impartial person doing this work.

Probably his most remembered Elsay contribution was his work after the 1993 Flood. He was the one who suggested to and helped the Village of Elsay

coordinate over a dozen Elsay property owners to prepare applications to the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency for restoration grants. After the 1993 Flood, Historic Elsay Foundation had acquired Farley Music Hall; and it was also one of the beneficiaries of his efforts.

Jack's own professional work was wide ranging. In his later years, he was the "go to" person for many local communities, large and small. Jack was involved early in the beautiful restoration of the Stephenson House in Edwardsville, Illinois. However, his passion was French vertical log buildings. His book, Vanishing French Heritage, which he coauthored with Jesse Francis, is available from the Kellerman Foundation.

Thank you, Jack. And thank you Helen, his supportive and understanding wife, for letting Jack serve in so many ways. Jack's legacy lives well beyond his years. I feel privileged to have known him.

The following are just two descriptions (used with permission) of Jack and his work:

1. **From: *Vanishing French Heritage***  
<http://www.vanishingfrenchheritage.com/authors>

*Jack Luer (1935-2016) was a historic preservation architect with dozens of restorations and renovations to his credit in Missouri and Illinois. His interest in French colonial architecture began around 1958, just before he graduated from the Washington*

*University School of Architecture. Jack became well known for his work on harmonious infill housing in historic neighborhoods such as Lafayette Park, Soulard, Carondelet and LaSalle Park, and throughout his career was frequently hired for special restoration projects by the states of Missouri and Illinois. He was a past Member of the Board of Directors for the Center for French Colonial Studies, and past Chairman of the Landmarks Association of St. Louis. He also sat on the Missouri Council for Historic Preservation and was a Member of the Trust for the Charles Peterson Institute for the Preservation of French Heritage. He was a registered architect in Missouri, Illinois and Florida and held an NCARB certification.*

**2. From: The Kellerman Foundation**

<http://www.kellermanfoundation.org/scholarships.html>



*Jack Luer was born to Bert and Pauline Luer of Arnold, Missouri in 1935. Jack remembered "practicing" architecture from an early age at his father's knee. The passion for*

*architecture was shared between father and son.*

*In 1958, Jack graduated from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri with a degree in architecture. He worked on projects alongside his father and opened an independent practice in 1963.*

*As an architect, Jack was known for providing detailed drawings, being versatile in his interactions with clients, his creativity, and having a hands on practical approach. Jack was also known for his passion for mentoring young professionals. He took on students and provided them with the opportunity to grow and develop into a new generation of architects. Throughout his life, historic preservation was one of his passions. He worked to save historically significant structures throughout the region.*

*Jack passed away at age 81 on May 17, 2016. He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Helen Luer, and five children, 20 grandchildren, and 5 great grandchildren. Before his passing, the Kellerman Foundation established the Jack Luer Scholarship in his honor, which will continue in memorial.*

*The \$1,000 scholarship is given out annually to a student pursuing a degree focused on architecture and/or historic preservation. If you are interested in applying please contact the foundation (Kellerman Foundation) at [kellermanfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:kellermanfoundation@gmail.com) for more information.*



**Tribute—  
Glenn Felch: Artist, Teacher and  
Friend**



“Keller’s Alley” by Glenn Felch

Glenn Felch was an artist and teacher. He was generous, kind, talented, patient and a friend of Elsah. As a bachelor, he lived at 12 Mill and then at Riverview House (12 Mississippi). He married Judith McCreary and they both lived in and restored Riverview. Later, they moved to 16/18 Palm where they welcomed their two children, Anna and Daniel.

He drew or painted most of Elsah’s structures. He edited and wrote *Elsah History* newsletters that were complimented with his drawings. He also was Director of the Village of Elsah Museum to which he brought his artistic layout of the exhibits.

With his personal life and artistic talent, he gave the Elsah community a beautiful view of itself and its past. Glenn will be remembered for his Elsah vision and artwork, both of which are an enduring legacy.

Last year, when some of his Elsah art works were featured in the 2015 Home for the Holiday House Tour, HEF worked with Glenn on a description of him and his work for a flyer. Below is the version that was used in that flyer. In writing this description, HEF gathered as much data as possible to make our communications easier. His major change to the description was the inclusion of Judith in the restoration of Riverview House. Riverview was a deep interest and occupation for many years. He devoted two *Elsah History* issues to it. And, of course, Judith, a wonderful artist herself, was an energetic partner in the restoration as well as the perfect mate and colleague for Glenn.

Historic Elsah Foundation still has Elsah Artworks by Glenn Felch for sale. The largest piece is “Keller’s Alley.”

Glenn died in July 2016. The following biographical statement was written when he was still alive, and thus is written in the present tense.

***Glenn Felch***

*Professor Emeritus of Studio Art, 2007  
Principia College Studio Art  
Department, Elsah, Illinois  
Independent artist and curator,  
Ellsworth, Maine*

*Born in New Rochelle, New York, Glenn Felch early on showed an interest in and talent for studio art. His studies led to the degrees of Bachelor of Arts from Principia College, 1968, and a Master of*

*Fine Arts from Bowling Green University in 1972. From 1973 to 2007, Felch taught studio art courses and led studio art field programs and programs abroad for Principia College. During his tenure at the college, he was appointed the Roy W. Johnson Distinguished Professor of Fine Arts. Now, having retired as a Professor Emeritus, Felch remains active as an independent artist.*

*From 1970-1971 Felch served in the United States Army. On assignments in Texas and Thailand as an artist, he created portfolios of non-combat aspects of Army activities.*

*Felch's work is found in many public and private collections. On permanent display at the Jersey County Courthouse in Jerseyville, Illinois, is a series of watercolor paintings featuring regional barns.*

*In addition to his fine art painting, Felch also illustrated a number of publications. He was author and illustrator of A Pictorial Primer of the Architecture Found in the Village of Elsah (1989) for which he received grants from the Illinois Arts Council, Two Rivers Arts Council and Historic Elsah Foundation. He illustrated a book of poetry by William Fox Conner, Memory's Glass (Pocahontas Press, 1995).*

*His illustrations appear in The Village of Elsah History, Recipes & Lore (1999). He produced a limited artist's proof edition of a children's book, Once Upon*

*a Valley, and an instructional drawing book, Once Upon a Sketch Book: Footnotes about pictorial composition in support of beginning drawing classes at Principia College, Elsah, Illinois. He also created a folio of pen and ink sketches, Rural Ambience, featuring landscapes in five rural Illinois counties.*

*Glenn Felch has two murals in Elsah. The most extensive and artistic is the 1973 Elsah Mural, located in the staircase of the McNair House at 66 Mill Street. The Elsah History newsletter, issue no. 61, provides more details on the mural by both the artist and the patrons, Jeralyn and Charles Hosmer.*

*The second mural is in the Village of Elsah Museum, in the Village Hall building, 26 LaSalle Street. This Elsah mural, created between 1964 and 1968, illustrates changes in the Elsah waterfront during the 19th century. Felch did extensive research on Elsah and the history of its buildings to complete both murals.*



*Historic Elsie Foundation has agreed to act as a gallery for seventeen, Felch's Elsie art works.*

*Glenn Felch is known for his long service to the Elsie community. He served in many ways as an artist, editor of the Historic Elsie Foundation's Elsie History newsletter, and director of the Village of Elsie Museum.*

*Glenn and his wife, Judith, patiently restored Elsie's Riverview House. Their work began after the flood of 1973 when they acquired the flood damaged building covered in tarpaper. They transformed the building back to its historic appearance. Now, the Felches maintain their residence and studios in Ellsworth, Maine.*

*Glenn Felch's skill and humor come through in his Elsie art pieces, as well as his deep love and appreciation for the Village of Elsie and its people.*

## **Donations--**

### **"Restore Our Doors project" for the Village Hall building**



For the past few years, the Museum Advisory Committee wondered how we could contribute to restoring our doors to better functionality while still preserving the original doors. We just did not know where to begin.

Sally Menke gave us a wonderful start. Sally is the owner of two Elsie buildings, 7 Mill Street and 2 Palm, and a generous host for Home for the Holidays for several years. Sally gave us copies of the Elsie Landing Cookbook, collected from friends, to sell in the Village of Elsie Museum. The museum committee decided to designate the revenue from the cookbook sales to assist with restoring our front doors. So for about two years we have been selling cookbooks, and Sally keeps sending them our way. We have made some people very happy. They often say "Oh, I have wanted an Elsie Landing Cookbook for so long!" We also have designated, for the last two years, museum donations received at the door to this project. However, we still had not collected enough to complete the "Restore Our Doors project."

Amy Taylor, a descendant of Peter Reintges, was in contact with Historic Elsie Foundation regarding photographs and information about her family. This fall during a visit to Elsie, Amy, with her husband, Tom Pope, offered to restore our Village Hall doors as a gift to the community and in recognition of her Reintges ancestors, including her father, William B. Taylor.

We are grateful for this loving donation. We know that the doors are in good hands and will receive sensitive and appropriate restoration. Jane Pfeifer delivered the doors to Glenview, Illinois and they will return in time for the opening of the museum the first weekend in April. We have wonderful reports of the progress of the work.

Bruce Pates, also a descendant of Peter Reintges, put in a generous monetary donation to this project, when he and Amy Taylor visited this fall.

We thank the Village of Elsau for their part in this effort. They have been dedicated owners of the Village Hall. Also, Mayor Bunting and the Village maintenance worker, Randy Greding, helped remove the hardware and put the doors in the Pfeifer van for delivery up to Glenview. Richard Mosby was hired by the Village of Elsau to remove the doors and install a temporary door. He quickly responded to this request even though the weather was very cold. We thank him for his work.

The remaining “Restore our Doors” funds will be spent for installation of the doors.



Moldings cleaned and ready for reinstallation

### **Donation – Elsah 1950s Photographs and Negatives**

This year, the Village of Elsau received Errol Campbell’s Elsau photographs and negatives for use in the museum. Errol Campbell was a 1951 graduate of Principia College who became a professional photographer. In the 1950s, he worked for The Principia Publications Department. During that period he captured some iconic Elsau images.

In his long career Campbell photographed a wide range of subject matter. He photographed celebrities such as Presidents John Kennedy and Ronald Reagan, architecture, and other commercial subjects. He was an artist with both a camera and paint.

The Elsau images will be donated to the museum after a loan period. The cover of this issue has one of those images, “Elsah Gateway ca 1950,” by Errol Campbell, winner of 2002 the Purchase Prize, “Focus on Elsau: Connections with the Past.”

The Village of Elsau gratefully accepts this donation for use in the museum. These high quality images provide both beauty and important information about changes in the Village.



## **Donation – James and Mary Semple Portraits and Demitasse Cup**



Recently we were contacted by A. Eric Rydgren, a descendent of James Semple through Semple's son Eugene. He donated information about the Semple family, a matched set of original photographs of James and Mary Semple in antique oval frames and a demitasse cup used at Notch Cliff, the Elsay summer mansion built by Lucy Semple Ames.

Our Village of Elsay Museum Fund has paid for the portraits' conservation framing using UV filtering glazing, acid free buffered mats and backs. The original mats, with a hand-drawn ink outline, while not suitable for display are being kept with the donation information.



Demitasse cup used at Notch Cliff

The demitasse cup was a gift by Lucy Semple Ames to one of her nieces, Mary Ethel Semple Swanstrom (daughter of Eugene and Ruth Lownsdale Semple, and grandmother to the donor, A. Eric Rydgren).

These donations have greatly added to our information about the Semple family and to the Village of Elsay Museum's collection of original Semple materials. HEF thanks the donor for these generous additions.

## **Historic Elsay Foundation News**

### ***New and retiring Board members***

HEF welcomes Robert Hormell (Chautauqua and Glen Carbon, IL) and Ruth Sparks (Fern Glen Valley) to our 2017 Board. They both bring a wealth of experience with other not-for-profits and a love of our area. We are grateful for their willingness to serve, and for the special skills they bring to this work.

HEF thanks retiring Board members, Paula Bradley, Steve Ira, Inge Mack and Mark Young. We appreciate each one for their service.

Steve Ira, with his experience leading major not-for-profits, guided our HEF Board policies development in 2009. His experienced voice was appreciated at HEF Board meetings.

Mark and Susan Young have been the leaders of the monthly contra dances.

Their daughter, Valerie Young, has taken up the mantel (or the dance shoes, microphone and planning role). These monthly dances are a chance for the community and dancers from the metro area to gather in a fun filled night of energetic dancing. Historic Elsie Foundation has supported these events by providing Farley Music Hall without charge. Live music and a caller make this a special night in Elsie. This spring, dance night is the second Saturday of the month at 7:00 pm, February through May.

Paula Bradley and Inge Mack have been on the Board essentially from the establishment of Historic Elsie Foundation in 1971. Their generous donations are too numerous to mention here. Some of their most well-known contributions come immediately to thought. Paula Bradley (and her husband, Edward “Ned” Bradley) opened their famous home for every house tour. Inge Mack served in offices such as Executive Director and Editor of the *Elsie History* newsletter and was a guiding force on the Board. They both were very generous in their financial contributions as well.

This winter we hope to have a special celebration recognizing the contributions of these former Board members.

### ***Village of Elsie Museum***

Historic Elsie Foundation and the Village of Elsie recently signed a new (renewed) agreement on the operation of the Village of Elsie Museum. Each

organization is the owner of parts of the collection.

The Museum Advisory Committee runs daily operations of the museum. The Committee (Connie Davis, Marjorie Doerr, Inge Mack, Jane Pfeifer, Mary Anne Schmidt and Sandra Stack) is composed of volunteer representatives from each organization. They meet monthly for planning, curating and installing exhibits. They hold regular work days for special projects. The current special project is an updated inventory of the museum collections.

### ***Annual Photography Exhibit***

In 2000, the first Village of Elsie Museum Photography Exhibit was a two week exhibit. The exhibit did not have a theme. The next year, a theme, “Photography and the Creative Eye” was added to the exhibit. In 2002 a first place purchase prize and an outside judge were added. The latest major change was added in 2009. In order to recognize the entire corporate limits of the Village, two purchase prizes were given, one for a photograph taken in the valley area of Elsie and one taken in the Elsie bluff area including the Eliestoun estate area, all of Principia College and Chautauqua.

Green Tree Inn provides a night’s stay for the winner of the valley purchase prize. Greatriverroad.com is the donor of the purchase prize for a photograph taken in the Elsie surrounding area. Complete information about the exhibit is at url: [Elsahevents.com](http://Elsahevents.com).

We thank the Village of Elsieh, Greatriverroad.com, Green Tree Inn, Burton Art Services and donors to the Village of Elsieh Museum for their support of this exhibit.

The Village of Elsieh Museum 2017 Annual Photography Exhibit will be held on Saturday, April 1 to Sunday August 6, 2017. The theme for this exhibit is "A Village for All Seasons."

Saturday, April 1, the Exhibit opens with a reception and announcement of the winners for 2017.

The theme for 2018 will be "My Favorite Door."



"Bluff Top View" by Jeff Vaughn, winner of the 2016 Greatriverroad.com purchase prize. The theme was "Right-sized Elsieh." The judge said regarding the expression of theme, "...a square format accented the intimate view through the bluff scene to the River. This view provides a contrast of size with the bluffs and river."

### ***Home for the Holidays 2016***

Historic Elsieh Foundation had another successful house tour and holiday celebration on Saturday, December 3,

2016. We welcomed 361 guests to Elsieh. We had over 50 volunteers serve as hosts and helpers.

Blair Smith was again chairperson of the Holiday Committee. Jon Hosmer and Jane Pfeifer were also on the committee. Jon composed and did the layout for a special booklet about the houses. The Principia College Copy Center printed the booklet as a donation to this event.

Historic Elsieh Foundation is grateful to report that our underwriters, contributors, donors, members and home owners have made it possible for our total revenue to exceed our total expenses for the year. We thank them.

#### ***Historic Elsieh Foundation***

President: Tim Tomlinson  
Vice President: Jane Pfeifer  
Secretary: Blair Smith  
Treasurer: Jeff Cornelius

#### **Board members:**


Terri Darr  
Robert L. Hormell  
Jonathan Hosmer  
George Provenzano  
Alley Ringhausen  
Ruth Sparks  
Sandra Stack  
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On our **Wall of Honor** at Farley Music Hall, we have the following sign.

**Historic Elsay Foundation Thanks  
The 2016 Underwriters, Contributors, Homeowners and Volunteers**

**Underwriters**



- Jersey State Bank, Jerseyville, IL
- William R. Haine, Illinois State Senator, 56<sup>th</sup> District
- Dan Beiser, Illinois State Representative, 111<sup>th</sup> District
- Principia College, Elsay, IL
- Liberty Bank, Godfrey, IL

- H. Adams Development Company, Alton, IL
- Federal Steel, East Alton, IL
- Grafton Technology, Jerseyville, IL
- Quality Motors, Jerseyville, IL

**Contributors**

- Alton Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Claddagh Carriage Company
- CNB Bank, Jerseyville, IL
- Elsay General Store, Elsay, IL

- Friends of Eliestoun, Elsay, IL
- Green Tree Inn, Elsay, IL
- Maple Leaf Cottages, Elsay, IL
- My Just Desserts, Alton, IL

- PhotogBuddies, Godfrey, IL
- Jane and David Pfeifer
- Rose and Timothy Tomlinson

**Homeowners**

- Paula Bradley
- Duncan Charters and Cecily Lee
- Linda Gilroy

- Great Rivers Land Trust
- Sally Menke
- Ute Levi

- Barbara and Ted Ostrowski
- Bob and Christy Phillips
- Mike and Pauline Pitchford

**And the many volunteers and visitors to our annual Home for the Holidays**

Your continued interest in the Historic Elsay Foundation is greatly appreciated.

### Membership for 2017

Patron: \$25 to \$99  
 Supporter \$100 to \$249  
 Founders' Circle \$250 and above  
 James Semple  
 Business Associate: \$100

### Contact

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